

**SECRET**

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26 July 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR : Chief, Security Branch, Development Projects Division  
SUBJECT : Briefing of Policy Officials on DPD Activities

1. I am gravely concerned about the erosion of security inherent in the recent expansion of the requirement to brief high level policy officials on DPD operations in the course of obtaining necessary political permission to conduct these operations. I have specific reference to what we have come to call the "Black Book" type of presentation which came to be a fashion with the IDEALIST Program on a much smaller scale some years ago.

2. There were signs even in the last days of the previous Administration that this system of briefing could easily get out of hand. However, at that time the majority of the pre-operation briefings of this sort were carried on personally by the Director, the DDCI, or the DD/P with the sometime assistance of personnel in DPD Operations. In most instances it was possible to fulfill the requirement for the production of this material with a single, or at most two, such Black Books. In the case of operations other than IDEALIST, it was only occasionally necessary to create Black Books of this sort in modest quantities, and for the most part these remained exclusively within Agency or DPD control.

3. Since January of this year, several things have combined to increase the requirement for briefings of this sort with the resultant ill effects I have alluded to above. Without attempting to rank these factors, I would identify them as about as follows:

a. The new Administration has made not only the expected changes in personalities and previously established ways of doing things, but as is the case with any major shift of this sort, new lines of coordination and responsibility are rapidly established and frequently take many months to sort themselves out before a harmonious working relationship can be achieved. For example, the position of the so-called 5412 Committee in the present Administration is much stronger in my view than

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under Mr. Eisenhower. As a consequence, more subjects tend to come before it for consideration, and these are not solely confined to those extremely sensitive operations which formerly came to the 5412 Committee. Also, the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, which under the previous Administration had an almost invisible policy role, now has emerged as a strong policy group with a vested interest in all covert operations. To this body we are also entrusting detailed information regarding sensitive operations on a fairly regular basis, though at the present moment not in the Black Book format.

b. In the wake of the Cuban disaster, there has been a natural emergence of additional control mechanisms on all types of covert operations under the aegis of the Government. The Administration at all policy levels appears highly sensitized to anything covert, and consequently many people become interested in all covert operations and to a far greater degree than was heretofore the case. As an example of this, I cite the establishment following Cuba of the so-called Situation Room in the White House where all clandestine activities of the Government are posted in such a way as to be available to the Chief Executive. Although at the present we do not submit Black Books to this source, it is not impossible that such a requirement could develop, since we do furnish them a monthly forecast of all air operations. At the same time the Joint Reconnaissance Center in DOD has finally matured and becomes the resting place for sensitive operational information being undertaken within the purview of the DOD. To this body DPD regularly contributes basic information regarding certain of its operations, simply in order to avoid areas of conflict with ongoing programs there. ✓

4. There are other influences which have tended to make the problem of pre-mission coordination more complicated. One of these is that in contrast to 5412 Committee meetings in past years where subjects came up for discussion and were resolved in one or two meetings, some items have dragged on for months since the first of the year, necessitating the almost weekly production of Black Books for each of the members of the Committee, detailing at great lengths various operational proposals. It could be inferred that this has resulted from not only the change of Administration and the strengthening of the role of the 5412, but the concurrent involvement of the DD/P in other matters to the point where he was no longer able to personally brief the Special Group from a single book as had been the custom in the past. Another measure of the problem can be taken from a

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comparison of our pre-mission coordination procedure with the Department of State in the previous Administration with the order followed at present. On a sensitive operation in the past, the Director, General Cabell, or Mr. Bissell usually briefed the Secretary or Under Secretary of State personally, again from material retained by them. On occasion the Director of Intelligence and Research would make it possible for the Acting Chief, DPD, or his representative to personally brief the Secretary on a given mission working from briefing charts. At the present time it is necessary for us to create an extremely detailed Black Book here in the Division, which then is sent to the present Director of Intelligence and Research, his deputy, or one of his special assistants, and they then accept responsibility for briefing the Secretary or the Under Secretary across the board without the presence of any one from the Agency. This Black Book is then carried to the Special Group meeting by the Under Secretary. The problem really is that once you give a Black Book to a single member of any policy body there ensues an immediate requirement to give everyone else attending the meeting a book with the same detailed information. As a horrible example of the lengths to which this can be carried, the material on Project TACKLE, which was prepared for 5412 consideration earlier this month and in connection with a highest level White House meeting on 14 July, DPD Intelligence Staff was obliged to create no less than nine Black Books (red in this instance) which contained the ingredients of the entire TACKLE Program: listings of highest priority targets, cover story, sample mission routes, etc. As if this were not enough, subsequent to the 14 July meeting a requirement originating with General Taylor called for a more condensed version of the earlier material, including the actual mission track of the new [redacted] Operation.

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5. Not only have we literally gone into the publishing business on this sensitive material, but I feel that we have lost almost complete control of the actual location of the books once they have left this office. Operating against us are the simple facts that because this material is going to busy VIPs who are frequently inaccessible, the responsibility for receipting for this material rarely, if ever, falls to the VIP himself but is delegated to the secretary or typist nearest the door of the high level official. Once she has signed for the document she does not have the foggiest idea of its physical location I am sure. The other factor working away from good security is that the recipient of this material has no restriction placed on him as to those persons to whom he shows the book or in some cases gives it for temporary retention. In some cases I am certain that it is literally passed around among interested officials close to the VIP but about whose clearance status we have no way of knowing anything. In addition, there is the always present problem of

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retrieving these books after a policy approval meeting. I venture that there are still outstanding copies of some of these Black Books outside the Agency where we cannot say for sure how long, if ever, it will be before we get them back.

6. The day does not go by but what I shudder to think of the repercussions that would follow the loss of one of these books by someone in a public conveyance or in some equally compromising situation where knowledge of its contents could pass to unauthorized personnel including members of the press. Should this occur I am virtually certain that we would have a repeat of the highest level concern, resulting from the publication in NEWSWEEK of the Administration's plan for meeting the Berlin Crisis. In addition to all the things I have said to date, there is the sheer physical problem of reproduction of these materials within the DPD Intelligence Staff. They simply are not manned to turn out books with the detail and art work frequently necessary. I have had one suggestion from that quarter regarding a possible way in which some control might be introduced and that is that each book be preprinted in gold letters with its classification on the cover, together with a printed control number as well as a brief description of its contents; i.e., "Development Projects Division, Central Intelligence Agency, Operations Briefing Book." The thought is that a combination of the number and the vivid description might impel the recipients to take better care of its movements and storage once it was in their hands. It has also been suggested that in contrast to the present "Hand Carry" system for these materials that a rigid Top Secret Control System be substituted, calling for actual signatures, not only of recipients, but of everyone who sees its contents. Given the usual time envelope for submissions of this material, such a slowdown would undoubtedly provoke complaints and criticisms from a number of quarters. I maintain, however, that these criticisms, however vocal, are preferable to the compromise of a single sensitive operation. The root of the problem, however, seems to me to lie with the fact that the number of books in circulation must be drastically reduced, and this without hurting the inevitable feelings of the officials involved. Such a reduction will call for the increased personal participation of the DCI, the DDCI, or the DD/P, working from a single Black Book in the actual physical briefing of high level officials whose approval is required for a given mission. We can also hope that as a confidence factor in the Agency method of operations is gradually re-established, the number of subjects requiring detailed presentations of this type will be progressively reduced. In the meantime, however, I think we are in real danger, and I earnestly request that you not only consider this problem yourself but that you discuss it with the Director of Security and others in the Agency whose opinions you value, culminating hopefully in a recommendation as to the course we

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should follow in order to be consistent with the best security practice. If we are not able to control this situation, I think that a major leak is just a matter of time and that at a minimum the requirement for more and more books with greater amounts of detail will continue. It is a very short step indeed between giving a mission track in advance of an operation to actually circulating the Operations Order for pre-mission coordination within the Government. Let me have your views on this at your earliest convenience.

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JAMES A. CUNNINGHAM, JR.  
Assistant Chief  
DPD-DD/P

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- 1, 2 - DPD/SO
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DPD-DD/P:JACunningham, Jr./mg

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